

IN THE CLAIMS:

Page 21 before Claim 1, delete the following heading:

CLAIMS

Page 21, before Claim 1, insert the following new heading:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Please amend claims 1-21 and add new claims 22-26 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ A telecommunication cable comprising an elongated element housing at least one transmitting element, said element comprising a water-soluble polymeric composition which comprises:
 - [[.]] a vinyl alcohol/vinyl acetate copolymer having a saponification degree of from about 60% to about 95%;
 - [[.]] a plasticizer; and
 - [[.]] a hydrolysis stabilizer compound comprising a chelant group comprising two hydrogen atoms bonded to two respective heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur, said two hydrogen atoms having a distance between each other of ~~from~~ 4.2×10^{-10} m to 5.8×10^{-10} m, ~~preferably of from~~ 4.5×10^{-10} m to 5.5×10^{-10} m [[.]] said stabilizer compound being present in an amount of at least 0.75 mmoles per 100 g of copolymer.
2. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of said chelant group is ~~of~~ at least 0.8 mmoles per 100 g of said copolymer.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of said chelant group is ~~of~~ at least 1.0 mmoles per 100 g of said copolymer.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of said chelant group is lower than about 3.5 mmoles per 100 g of said copolymer.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of said chelant group is lower than about 3.0 mmoles per 100 g of copolymer.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said two heteroatoms forming said chelant group are nitrogen atoms.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 6, wherein said two nitrogen atoms are included in two respective amide moieties of the formula -CO-NH-.

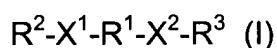
8. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of copolymer is ~~from~~ about 50% to about 95% of the total weight of the polymeric composition.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the amount of copolymer is ~~from~~ about 60% to 85% of the total weight of the polymeric composition.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said plasticizer is present in an amount of ~~from~~ 5 to 30 parts by weight per hundred parts by weight of the copolymer.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said plasticizer is present in an amount of ~~from~~ 10 to 25 parts by weight per hundred parts by weight of the copolymer.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said stabilizer compound is a compound of formula I:



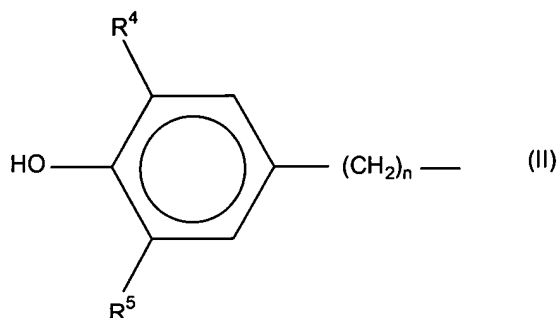
wherein

R^1 represents a linear or branched C_1 - C_{10} alkylene, optionally substituted with one or two groups selected from alkyl substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, benzyl or hydroxyphenyl;

X^1 and X^2 each independently represent a moiety comprising a heteroatom-bonded hydrogen selected from -NH-, -CO-NH-, -CH(OH)- or -CH(SH)-; and

each of R^2 and R^3 independently represent a linear or branched C_1 - C_{10} alkyl, optionally substituted with a group selected from alkyl substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, benzyl or hydroxyphenyl.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 12, wherein R^2 and R^3 each independently represent a moiety of formula (II):

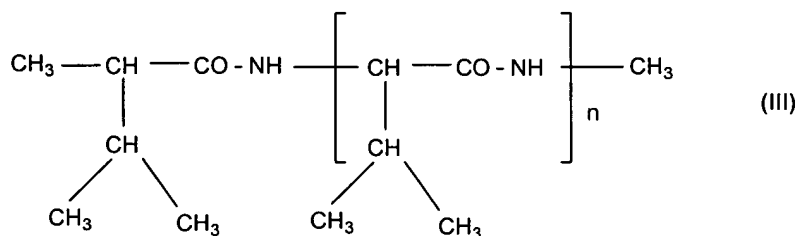


wherein R^4 and R^5 independently represent a C_1 - C_6 linear or branched alkyl moiety, preferably t-butyl[[,]] and n is an integer from 0 to 6[[,]] preferably 2.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 12, wherein said heteroatom moieties X_1 and X_2 are amide groups of the formula $-CO-NH-$

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said stabilizer compound is N,N'-esan-1,6-diilbis[3,5-di-(ter-butyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propionamide].

16. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said stabilizer compound is a poli L-aminoacid of formula (III):



where n is an integer from 1 to 5.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said copolymer has a hydrolysis degree of ~~from~~ about 70% to about 92%.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said elongated element containing ~~the~~ at least one transmitting element is a tubular element comprising at least one sheath made from said water-soluble polymeric composition.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 18, wherein said tubular element comprises a double layer sheath in which the inner sheath is made from said water-soluble polymeric composition and the outer sheath is made from a water-insoluble polymer material.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 18, wherein said tubular element further comprises a third outer sheath made from said water-soluble polymeric composition.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~Telecommunication~~ The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein said elongated element is a grooved core comprising at least one groove longitudinally disposed on the outer surface of said core and housing said at least one transmitting element.

22. (New) The telecommunication cable according to claim 1, wherein the distance between the two hydrogen atoms is 4.5×10^{-10} m to 5.5×10^{-10} m.

23. (New) The telecommunication cable according to claim 12, wherein the linear or branched C₁-C₁₀ alkylene of R¹ is substituted with one or two groups selected from alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, benzyl or hydroxyphenyl.

24. (New) The telecommunication cable according to claim 12, wherein the linear or branched C₁-C₁₀ alkyl of R² and R³ is substituted with a group selected from alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, benzyl or hydroxyphenyl.

25. (New) The telecommunication cable according to claim 13, wherein the C₁-C₆ linear or branched alkyl moiety is t-butyl.

26. (New) The telecommunication cable according to claim 13, wherein n is 2.